[For historical sketches of cities, see category 369 or Index, category 116, 6: Spate AW1 India.]

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

November. During the first half of the month the wind and weather are very uncertain; a cyclone may occur; after the middle of the month the north-east monsoon sets in. 132

December. Fairly cool; not much rain; wind N.N.E.

Many of the violent cyclonic storms that sweep across the Sea of Bengal seem to form themselves a little to the south of the Andamans. Cyclones of exceptional violence struck Port Cornwallis in 1844 and Port Blair in 1864 and 1891.

The aborigines of the Andaman Islands have been in their present home for a great many centuries. It is not possible to say with any degree of certainty how or when they first reached the islands. Geological and other evidence would seem to show that the Andamans were united to the mainland along the line of the Arakan Fold in later Tertiary times, but even this is perhaps not quite certain[1]. In any case the period of past land connection seems to be so remote that it had probably ceased to exist at the time when the islands were peopled by the ancestors of the present natives. If the ancestors of the Andamanese reached the islands at the time of a past land connection, they can only have done so from the Arakan region of Burma. On the other hand, if they travelled by sea they must almost certainly have started from the Burmese coast (Pegu or Arakan). The north-east monsoon would drift them thence on to the Andamans. It is conceivable that they might have travelled from Sumatra by way of the Nicobars, but the north-east monsoon would have opposed their progress in this direction, while the south-west monsoon would have driven them to the east of the Andamans[2]. It is hardly possible to imagine them coming from the Malay Peninsula across the wide 174

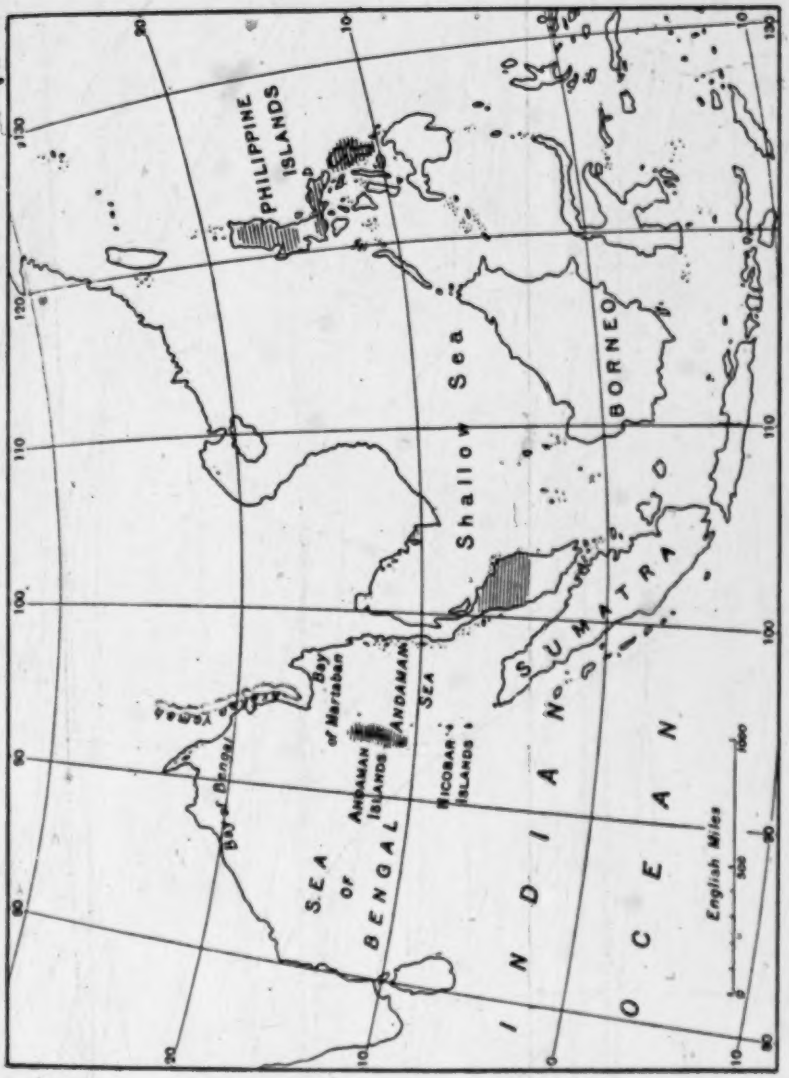
[1] The flora of the Andamans and Cocos contains a number of species, the presence of which can only be explained by the supposition of a past land connection with the Arakan region. (See Prain, "The Vegetation of the Coco Group," *Journ. Asiatic Soc. of Bengal*, Vol. LX, Part II, pp. 283—406.) On the other hand, the paucity of mammalian fauna is such as to lead to the conclusion that the islands were isolated at a period when the mammals now typical of the mainland did not exist there. (See Miller, "Mammals of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands," *Proc. National Museum, U.S.A.* Vol. XXIV.)

[2] There is no evidence of the former existence of Negritos in the Nicobars, but on the other hand, there is equally no direct evidence of their former presence in Lower Burma.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

MAP I

174
144



South-eastern Asia, showing the present distribution of the Negrito Race

[facing p. 6]

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

stretch of the Andaman Sea. The balance of probability is in favour of the view that the Andamans were peopled, either by sea or by land, from the region of Lower Burma.

Of the Negrito race, to which the Andamanese belong, there are two other branches still in existence. The first of these consists of the people who may be conveniently spoken of as the Semang, inhabiting the interior of the Malay Peninsula between 5° and 7° N. Latitude. The other branch of this primitive race is found in the interior of the Philippine Islands. From their present distribution it is clear that the Negritos must at some long past time have wandered over a wide area in south-eastern Asia. The connection between the Andamanese and the Semang can only have been either through Sumatra and the Nicobars, or, more probably, by way of Lower Burma. Communication between the Malay Peninsula and the Philippine Islands must have been either by way of Borneo or Celebes, or else by way of Annam and Cochin China. It is certainly many centuries, and probably many thousands of years, since the three surviving branches of the race were cut off from all communication with each other[1].

In the Malay Peninsula and in the Philippines the Negritos have for a long time been living in contact with other races. They have been driven back from the coasts and fertile valleys into the less accessible districts. There is ample evidence that they have adopted many of the customs of the races around them, and have even adopted to a great extent the language of their alien neighbours. The original Negrito culture and language and even perhaps the original physical type have been modified in these two branches of the race.

In the case of the Andaman Islanders it is possible that they have been entirely isolated in their island home, and have not been affected by contact with other races, but have been free to develop their own culture in adaptation to their own environment. If a hypothesis to this effect were accepted we should see in the Andamanese the direct descendants, in physical character, in language, and in culture, of the original Negrito race.

[1] On the accompanying map of south-eastern Asia the regions now occupied by the Negritos are shown by the shading.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

the natives of the Little Andaman, but they are of sufficient importance to make it necessary to distinguish them from one another. 619

The different divisions of the Andamanese may for convenience be set out in the form of a table.

I. GREAT ANDAMAN GROUP.

A. Northern Group, including the tribes:—

Aka-Čari,
Aka-Kora,
Aka-Bo,
Aka-Jeru.

B. Southern Group, including the tribes:—

Aka-Kede,
Aka-Kol,
Ok-Juwoi
A-Pučikwar,
Akar-Bale,
Aka-Bea.

II. LITTLE ANDAMAN GROUP.

A. The inhabitants of the Little Andaman (*Önge*).
B. The *Jarawa* of the South Andaman.
C. The inhabitants of the North Sentinel Island.

The distribution of these different groups as it was in 1858 is shown on the map.

There is one important feature of this distribution that requires a few words of explanation, and that is the presence in the South Andaman of the *Jarawa* who are allied by language and technical culture to the natives of the Little Andaman. There can be no doubt that the *Jarawa* are the descendants of emigrants who at some time in the past made their way across from the Little Andaman and thrust themselves in upon the inhabitants of Rutland Island and the South Andaman, maintaining their footing in the new country by force of arms. 619 174

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

619
•174 The identity of the flora and fauna of the Little Andaman with those of the Great Andaman and the shallowness of the strait between the islands, suggests that at no very remote period they have been united by a continuous land connection. Whether or not this connection existed at the time when the islands were first peopled, it is at any rate reasonable to suppose that the original ancestors of the present Andamanese had one language and one culture. Once the Little Andaman was peopled, the strait between it and the Great Andaman seems to have acted as an effective barrier, to keep the two divisions of the race apart for many centuries. During the period of this separation each division followed its own line of development, with the result that there arose the considerable differences of language and culture that now exist.

At a much later date than this separation of the Andamanese into two isolated groups, and after the typical differences of language and culture had been developed, a party of natives must have made their way by canoe from the north of the Little Andaman to Rutland Island. They would have found that country occupied by natives of the Great Andaman Group. In spite of this they succeeded in establishing themselves in the South Andaman, and became the progenitors of the present *Jarawa*. Owing to the difference of language all communication between the Little Andaman invaders and those already occupying the invaded country would be impossible. (At the present day a native of the Little Andaman cannot make himself understood to a native of one of the Great Andaman tribes.) The result has been that the *Jarawa* have lived in a state of constant warfare with their neighbours, and this hostility has lasted down to the present day.

It is only on the above hypothesis that it is possible to explain how it comes about that we find in the South Andaman people with language and technical culture very similar to that of the Little Andaman, and differing from that of the remaining inhabitants of the Great Andaman. It is impossible to say how long it is since this invasion from the Little Andaman took place. At the end of the eighteenth century the *Jarawa* were to be found in the neighbourhood of Port Blair. Lieutenant

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Colebrooke in 1790 came across an individual of this tribe and obtained from him a vocabulary. A comparison of this vocabulary with the language of the Little Andaman shows it to be essentially the same language[1].

A few words must be said on the position of the natives of the North Sentinel Island. Almost nothing is known of these people. What little information is available concerning their weapons and implements seems to point to their belonging to the Little Andaman Division. There is no communication between them and either the Great Andaman or the Little Andaman. It is possible that they have been separated from the other Andamanese as long as those of the Little Andaman have been separated from those of the Great Andaman, and would therefore constitute a third separate division. The South Sentinel Island is uninhabited.

The total area of the Andamans is estimated to be about 2500 square miles. This area is divided as follows:—

	Sq. miles.
North Andaman, being the territory of the four tribes Aka-Cari, Aka-Kora, Aka-Bo, and Aka-Jeru	540
Middle Andaman and Baratang, occupied by four tribes, Aka-Kede, Aka-Kol, Oko-Juwoi and A-Pucikwar	790
The Archipelago, occupied by the Akar-Bale tribe	140
The South Andaman, occupied by the Aka-Bea and the Jarawa	630
North Sentinel Island	30
Little Andaman	370
	2500

It is not possible to give accurately the area occupied by each tribe, as the boundaries are difficult to discover. The *Aka-Bea* is in an exceptional position, as there was no definite boundary between them and the *Jarawa*. The two parties of natives lived in the same territory at enmity with each other. It would seem that the *Aka-Bea* kept on the whole more to the coast, while the *Jarawa* lived in the interior.

[1] In 1906 some Little Andaman visitors to Rutland Island captured a *Jarawa* of that part. They told me that though he spoke differently from them, they could understand him fairly well.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

APPENDIX A

THE TECHNICAL CULTURE OF THE ANDAMAN ISLANDERS

In this appendix I shall give a brief account of the technical culture of the Andaman Islanders, with a few comparative notes on the technology of the Semang of the Malay Peninsula and the Negritos of the Philippine Islands. The Andamanese, the Semang and the Philippine Negritos are so similar in physical characteristics that it is reasonable to suppose that they are descended from a single stock. It is on the basis of this hypothesis that they are all spoken of as belonging to one race, the Negrito race. It is therefore of some interest to compare the culture of these three different peoples to see if we can determine what was the culture of their ancestors.

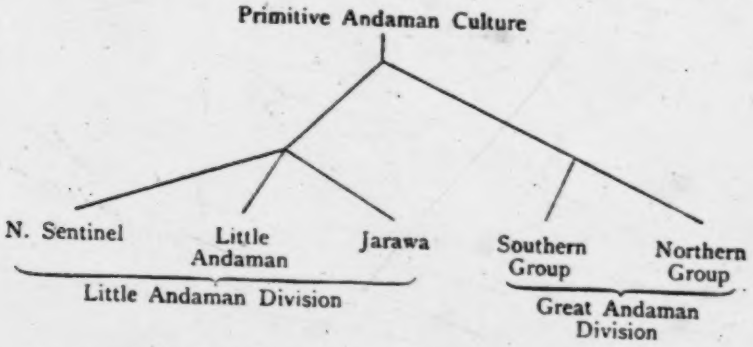
In such hypothetical reconstructions of the past it is necessary to proceed with extreme caution, as there is no means of controlling results. The method I have adopted is to compare first of all the different types of technological products or activities found in different parts of the Andamans in order to determine as far as possible what was the technical culture of the ancestors of the Andamanese when they first reached the islands, and what changes have taken place since the islands were occupied. It is only this primitive or generalised Andamanese culture that can be compared with that of the Semang or the Philippine Negritos.

From the point of view of technical culture the natives of the Andamans must be separated into two main divisions, which will be spoken of as the Great Andaman Division and the Little Andaman Division respectively[1]. The most plausible explanation of the differences of culture and language between these two divisions has been mentioned already. We must assume that when the islands were first peopled, or at some later time, the inhabitants of the Little Andaman became isolated from those of the Great Andaman. The language and the

[1] See Introduction, p. 12.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

174 technical culture of each of the two groups underwent a number of changes during the many centuries that followed. At a much later date, after the differences between the two divisions had been developed, and probably not many centuries ago, a party or several parties of natives must have made their way from the Little Andaman as far as Rutland Island. Here they came in conflict with the natives of the Great Andaman Division, and in this way arose the antagonism between the Jarawa (the immigrants from the Little Andaman) and the other natives of the South Andaman (who formed in 1858 the Aka-Bea tribe), which has lasted down to the present day. We shall find that the technical culture of the Jarawa has been only very slightly influenced by contact with the natives of the Great Andaman Division, and therefore differs very little from that of the Little Andaman at the present day.



I have provisionally included the natives of the North Sentinel Island in the Little Andaman Division. The ground for so doing is that the form of bow in use in the North Sentinel Island is similar to that of the Little Andaman and unlike that of the Great Andaman. Unfortunately, almost nothing is known about the technology of the North Sentinel, and nothing whatever about the language. It is possible that the natives of this outlying islet have been isolated for many centuries from both the Little Andaman and the Great Andaman, and further information about them might show that their technology is different in important respects from that of the Little Andaman.

Within the Great Andaman Division there are a number of differences in technology between the tribes of the North Andaman and those of the South Andaman and Middle Andaman.

In order to render the exposition and argument that follows more easily understood the supposed relations of the different types of culture

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

are shown in the form of a diagram or tree. The justification for this arrangement will appear as we proceed.

There is only very scanty information available about the technical culture of the Negritos of the Malay Peninsula, whom we may speak of as the Semang. There are differences of technology between the Semang of different parts, and a careful study of these differences would serve to throw much light on changes that have been introduced since the Semang were isolated from the rest of their race. There is no doubt that the Semang have adopted many elements of their present culture from their neighbours the Sakai and others. In some instances it is possible to trace this external influence, but in others it is doubtful whether we are dealing with a primitive Semang form or with a form adopted from their neighbours[1].

The same thing must be said about the Philippine Negritos. Our information is not sufficient to enable us to discuss the local differences, nor to determine what elements of the culture have been introduced by contact with other races[2].

HABITATIONS.

The huts of the Andamanese are best understood by considering first of all the simplest and most temporary structures. A man away from the main camp at night (on a hunting expedition) erects for himself a simple shelter of leaves. Such hunting shelters vary considerably according to circumstances. In the rainy season they are built much more substantially than in the dry season. Sometimes shelter is found between the buttresses of large trees, a few leaves being added. There is, however, one type of hunting shelter that is usual. Two poles are cut and erected perpendicularly in the ground so that they stand about four feet apart and about four feet high. To the top of these is tied, with cane or creeper, a horizontal pole. A few poles or sticks of sufficient length are placed so as to lean against the horizontal pole at an angle of about 45°, the ends resting on the ground. On these are placed any leaves that can be obtained,

[1] The information here given as to the Semang is derived from two works, Skeat and Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula*, vol. I, quoted as *Skeat*, and Rudolf Martin, *Die Inlandstämme der Malayischen Halbinsel*, 1905, quoted as *Martin*.

[2] The information about the Philippine Negritos is derived from Reed, *Negritos of Zambales*, Manila, 1904, quoted as *Reed*, and A. B. Meyer, *Die Philippinen, II, Die Negritos*, Dresden, 1893, quoted as *Meyer*.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

501 canoe was 18 inches in diameter at the smaller end and perhaps 30 inches wide at the larger end.

This description shows that the canoe of the North Sentinel is on the whole more like that of the Little Andaman than like that of the Great Andaman.

501 171 It seems probable that the Andaman Islands were peopled by sea from the coast of Burma. If this were so, then the original ancestors of the Andamanese must have been in possession of canoes. A consideration of the present Andaman canoes suggests that their ancestors had canoes with a single outrigger on the starboard side, with a number of booms. Of the different methods of attaching the booms to the float, it is possible that the method now in use in the Little Andaman (and apparently also in the North Sentinel) is primitive, and that the Great Andaman attachment is an improvement that has been invented since the separation of the two divisions. On the other hand it is not impossible that the Great Andaman attachment is primitive, and that in the Little Andaman we have a degeneration that might be due to the fact that the Little Andaman (and equally the North Sentinel) provides much less scope for maritime pursuits than the Great Andaman.

The recent invention of the large canoe in the Great Andaman and the adoption of the principle of the oar shows that the Andamanese readily adopt new inventions when these are clearly of service to them.

Turning now to the Semang, as these people live inland they have no use for canoes. They make rafts of bamboos lashed together with which they float down the rivers, returning overland.

Some of the Philippine Negritos seem to live on the coast and possibly have canoes, but nothing is known about these.

CONCLUSION.

171 •174 The examination of the technical culture of the Andamanese given above has been sufficient to enable us to make a few statements as to what was probably the culture of the Negritos before they were split up into isolated groups. It is highly probable that they obtained their subsistence solely by hunting and collecting vegetable products. They had bows and arrows, the form of bow being probably fairly similar to that used at the present day in the Little Andaman, while for hunting the larger animals they had arrows with detachable heads. They possibly had no knowledge of any way of making implements of stone,

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

but made use only of such materials as wood, bone, and shell. It is not probable that they possessed the art of making pottery, and their basketry and mat-work were probably confined to very simple forms. In their personal ornaments there is reason to think that they showed a fondness for bright yellow vegetable fibre, and made little or no use of the feathers of birds. The ornamentation of their utensils was probably confined to the use of the simplest forms of geometric design with a preponderance of the zig-zag and the lozenge. Finally their huts consisted of a single sloping roof sufficient to afford shelter for a single family or larger huts consisting of such small huts joined together.

We have seen that since the Andamanese have occupied their present home, or at any rate since the Great Andaman Division and the Little Andaman Division have been separated from one another, many changes, some of considerable importance, have taken place in the Andaman technology. In general it would seem that the technical culture of the Great Andaman has changed more than that of the Little Andaman. Putting aside the effect on the technology of the introduction of iron, there is no evidence that any of the changes that have taken place in the Great Andaman have been due to outside influence. Important modifications have taken place in the form of the bow, in the forms and technique of baskets, and in personal ornaments, and in all these instances there is no reason to think that these changes have not been brought about by the natives themselves without the influence of contact with other people. Their method of working iron, based as it is, to all appearance, on their former method of working shell, shows that even here, though the iron itself came to them from outside, and even though they may have learnt its use from seeing it used by aliens, still they have not learnt from others how to fashion the metal into shape by heating it. Thus, so far as their technical culture is concerned, there is no evidence whatever that the Andamanese have ever been influenced by contact with any other race since the time, now many centuries ago, when they first reached the islands.

On the other hand there is some probability that the ancestors of the Andamanese, before they first reached the islands, or at any rate before the isolation of the Little Andaman from the Great Andaman, had learnt from some other race how to make pottery, and it is possible that at the same time they may have acquired other elements of their culture, such as the outrigger canoe. We may even give a guess as to the particular culture from which the ancestors of the

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

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Andamanese may have adopted these elements, which may well have been that of a branch of that people of whom an offshoot peopled the Nicobars.

Confirmation of these hypotheses, if confirmation be ever forthcoming, can only be obtained in the study of the history of races and of culture in south-eastern Asia. Until we have much fuller knowledge of the culture of the Semang and the Negritos of the Philippines, any conclusions that may be drawn from the study of the Andamanese alone must be regarded as provisional working hypotheses only, and it is as such that they are here put forward.

5: Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2 Nicobars AZ7 Maori OZ4

The Nicobarese values thus differ widely from the above. It will not be out of place here to mention of Eickstedt's samples from Upper Burma (Steffan, 1932) which gives 60% of O and 40% of B and stands somewhat closer to the Nicobarese data than the above figures of Mollison and Reddy.

In spite of the close cultural affinities of the Nicobarese with those of Malaya and Indo-China, in respect of their aversion to milk, the outrigger canoe, artificial deformation of head, the Malayan form of sniffing cheeks (Malay kiss), etc., the Nicobarese have so far remained ignorant of agriculture. It appears, therefore, that the Nicobarese migrated from a habitat where agriculture was unknown and it is among such peoples that their close congeners could be found.

Negritos, Australians and Polynesians

The above three ethnic stocks, though widely varying in physical features have in common the high element of blood group A. It remains to be seen how they stand in respect of the sub-groups of A and the MN factors. So far only the Australians have been subjected to the study of MN factors (Birdsell and Boyd, 1940).

The similarity of the above three peoples in respect of the blood groups was pointed out to some extent by Howells (1934) and as such Gates' statement (p. 28) is probably unjustified. The percentages of B come to 14·1 in the case of Negritos of the Philippines (Grove, 1926), to 5·00 in the case of those from the Andaman Islands and to 2·2 in the case of the Hawaiians* (Nigg, 1930). Samoa with its fairly large content of B of 19·4% (Shapiro, 1940) is already a problem. The paucity of B among the Australians is already well-known. All these appear to show that B is a later instrusion in this area and A was predominant among the Negritos and the Australoids as it is now. The Polynesian movements began towards the dawn of Christian era from Indonesia when B did not probably reach there. This might have influenced the Nicobarese as well and the 3·68% of A may be Polynesian in origin.

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* Time is ripe enough for discarding Phillips Maori data by now (see Shapiro, Howells, Graydon and Simmons, and Godley). They are compared with the recent data below:—

O	A	B	AB	
47·5%	39·5%	1·0%	12·0%	(Phillips, 1931 n=200)
41·2%	58·1%	0·7%	0	(Graydon & Simmons, 1945; n=267)
45·26%	48·74%	4·07%	1·91%	(Godley, 1946-47; n=835)
44·27%	52·96%	1·57%	1·20%	(Paddock, 1946; n=1335)

5: Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Nicobars AZ7
Maori CZ4

000 It will be thus futile to argue that the Negritos, who by race and culture, appear undoubtedly to be the oldest inhabitants of this area, were strong in B, unless we assume that B is lost. At least that will be similar to the supposition of Phillips who contented that the Morioris, the ancestor of the present Maoris, belonged to group B.

Summary

(1) 34 Onges grouped from the island of Little Andaman show the following distribution :—

O—14·71%, A—67·65%, B—5·88% and AB—11·76%.

(2) 22 Andamanese show the following distribution :—

O—9·09%, A—59·09%, B—22·72% and AB—9·09%.

(3) 4 Jarawa children were all found to belong to group O.

(4) 136 Nicobarese belong to the following groups :—

O—86·03%, A—3·68%, B—10·29%.

(5) Negrito affinities are discussed. Nicobarese blood groups show the highest O in India and Indonesia. Polynesian elements are probably evidenced by the presence of A.

(6) The Negritos, the Australians and the Polynesians all have high A and the B as seen in Samoa or Melanesia probably reached these islands after the Polynesian movements began in the dawn of Christian era.

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6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

841 resembling these practices in any other part of the world. Never hitherto
171 described, they should be carefully considered. This would require a lengthy description, for which there is no space here. We may recall that menstruating Onge women are allowed to circulate freely at all times. An interesting detail
[751] is that the *naquinēghē* of first menstruations are worn by relations around their neck as having health-giving properties. The women, as we know, use special
841 soft, long leaves, collected for them by their husbands, as absorbents. They
[824] are the leaves of Myristica longifolia or of Tretanthera lanceofolia both species serving the purpose. They are applied under the *naquinēghē* and drawn back between the legs to be secured above the buttocks. – Sexual intercourse is
[834] forbidden during the menstrual period even by the Onge : illness – a swelling
[753] of the arms or legs – would follow. A curious theory about the reason for menstruation in very young girls is that it is a result of previous sexual contacts
892 stimulated by nose rubbing – the Onge substitute for kissing. They ignore the unhygienic practice of kissing with the lips, and never even kiss their children. Only nose rubbing is practiced. The anatomical structure of the Onge nose, which almost totally lacks nasal bones and is very fleshy, may explain this transference of sensation from nearby regions, i. e. the lips.

844 Births take place in the forest and are surrounded by no hygienic precautions or disinfection as conceived by us. Clay is applied to stem puerperal bleeding, without provoking infection. The only assistant is the pregnant woman's husband, and sometimes one or two old women. Their ability equals that of a herdsman delivering his goat of a kid. No inconvenience arises, in either instance, from lack of precautions. – The tiny, tender and graceful bodies
[751] of Onge infants are smeared with ochre and light-coloured clay for hygienic purposes. This is done immediately after birth, and affords some protection against the teeming legions of mosquitos and ticks that plague Little Andaman. The infant is never washed in water, not even at the very moment of birth. The placenta is buried 30 or 40 cms deep, under the bed of naked branches upon which the mother delivered her baby.

842 An argument that deserves much attention concerns the possible link
143 between lack of hygiene and sterility among the Onge. A vast number of married couples have no offspring, thereby threatening their group with extinction. Consanguinity could be given as a cause : let us examine it. No doubt the Onge are related to each other as a consequence of long interbreeding in their island with no foreigners admitted. These conditions afford an ideal field for studying the effects of endogamy on man. Nowhere in the world, as far as I know, are a people so isolated as in Little Andaman. Inbreeding has existed at 100 % ever since remote times. In other words, the Onge would seem to be the most highly inbred human population known up to the present. Could this fact alone, aside from unhealthy habits, explain their present widespread sterility ? Special
174 studies on the subject should be undertaken, keeping in mind that the Onge have certainly inhabited Little Andaman for thousands of years, on the evidence of my excavations in their kitchen-middens.

113

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Jarawa

101 [197] 174 [648]

Although the Jarawa inhabit the jungles of South and Middle Andaman, they do not belong to the Great Andaman group of tribes, but are culturally and linguistically related to the Ongi. It is assumed that they originally came from Little Andaman. The Jarawa owe their survival to their having remained isolated as a result of their implacable hostility toward the British (now Indian) colonial settlement. Information on their raids and the punitive expeditions against them will be found in the respective volumes of the Census of India. [161] In 1931 their number was estimated at either 70 (BONINGTON) or 120 (HUTTON). Their culture conforms to the general Andamanese pattern, but differs in various respects from that of their former neighbours, the extinct Great Andaman tribes. Except for their communal huts and such of their material possessions as were found during punitive expeditions, practically nothing is known about it. Our knowledge of their language is restricted to lists of words col-

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

[P 51]

CHAPTER VIII

THE PEOPLE

The study of the people of the Andamans is rendered extremely interesting by virtue of the great diversities in the types of population. Obviously for the islands like the Andamans the diversities of population are far out of proportion. The islands remained as an abode of the aborigines, the negritoes, in complete seclusion and the only outside interference that had tampered the islands were the occasional raids by the sea pirates from Malaya. The beliefs about the occasional exchanges of commodities and ideas of the pirates with the Andamanese and the trade of the Andamanese for being sold as slaves in the courts of Siam and Cambodia are still now questions of doubt. However, it was only at the end of the 18th century, with the attempt of the formation of settlements and later on, of the penal settlement, that there began an influx of foreign peoples, mainly from the different parts of the mainland of India. With the formation of the penal colony, convicts were brought over to the islands in numbers and also a few attempts of free colonisation by some people from Burma and India were made. The convicts who were from the different parts of India and the free colonizors who were diverse enough in their social and cultural traits gave a character of heterogeneity to the islands. It was only after the attainment of the independence that the settlement of the East Bengal refugees and of some people from South India is taking place in the Andamans. This is going to add further to the cultural diversity of the islands. This scheme of colonisation of the East Bengal refugees and of some people from South India is the first attempt of some importance for the permanent colonization in the islands.

Such a variety in the types of people, can be broadly divided into three groups.

(a) The aboriginal population.
(b) The Later Settlers, and
(c) The New Settlers.

The aboriginal population belongs to the negrito stock and therefore, has an affinity with the Semangs and Sakais of Malaya, the Veddas of Ceylon and the other negrito groups of Southeast Asia. Some attribute the origin of these aborigines to the settlement of some Portuguese negro slaves who had survived by coming to these islands after a ship-

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

wreck. However, this idea is totally untenable. On the other hand there are sufficient grounds to believe that these aborigines came down from the lower region of Burma. On their arrival at the islands, they moved to the different parts of the islands and very likely, because of the different types of physical environment they developed different traits and as such a few groups of the population are discernible. They are the

(a) The Jarawas,
(b) " Onges,
(c) " Andamanese, and
(d) " Sentinelese.

All these groups, though physically akin to each other, have developed different social and economic traits and the ways of earning their food and constructing their shelters are conditioned by their immediate environment. These aborigines who had spread over the different parts of the Great Andamans are experiencing a gradual shrinkage in their areas of command because of the gradual expansion of the areas of the new settlers. The Jarawas are to-day confined to the western part of the South and Middle Andaman, the Andamanese, who are extremely limited in number are along the coastal areas, the Onges in the Little Andaman and Rutland Is. and the Sentinelese in the Sentinel islands. The relation of aborigines with the foreign people became one of deep distrust and hostility with some of the groups, especially the Jarawas and the Sentinelese, which has been very rightly explained by M. V. Portman as an outcome of the unfriendly attitude of the foreigners. The Onges and the Andamanese have however become very friendly with the foreigners. The number of the aboriginal population of the Andamans, is undoubtedly a matter of considerable speculation and it is more so in the case of the Jarawas and the Sentinelese whereas, for the Onges and the Andamanese the estimate is fairly correct.

The aboriginal population of the Andamans is fast declining in number and there is apprehension that inspite of the best of attempts, the chances of the survival of the aborigines for long ages are extremely limited. Undoubtedly, the aboriginal population of the Andamans is an object of interesting study. Such an interest grows out of its being the only purest negrito group in the world and the modes of their life depict very well the nature of symbiotic relationship existing between man and environment. Such a primitive economy of hunting and collecting has not changed appreciably inspite of the impact with the foreigners except imbibing some foreign vices.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

original type can still be found in the Little Andaman. The similarity of the arrows are also striking and this has been rightly observed by Dr. Cipriani,[1] 'Similarity also with the arrows. This consists of a barbed detachable head connected to the shaft by a string. The harpoon arrow like its near relative and probable forefather, the harpoon spears, offers an interesting question in ethnography. Although the Andamans are widely separated from Malaya and Malaya from the Philippines, the three groups of negritoes have harpoon arrows, while such weapons do not seem to be present in other regions of Asia.' The huts of the Andamanese are also the outcome of further improvements over the original negrito shelter found among the other negrito groups.

In the general habits and the modes of living, a good deal of similarity if not identity is maintained with the other negritoes. But changes and modifications have crept up among the different groups in response to the different environments. Some of the original habits have been totally forgotten and some equipments have been further improved upon or in some cases, totally forgotten. The Jarawas, who are believed to have arrived in the Great Andamans from the South had the knowledge of construction and use of the canoes which served as the means of their movement from the south to the north, have totally forgotten both the construction and use of it.

Though the changes brought about among the Andamanese in response to the environment and time is in no way inconsiderable to give them an impress of individuality, little room for doubt is left that they belong to the big family of the negritoes whose remnants are only found to-day scattered over the different parts of southeast Asia.

Origin of the Andamanese

The presence of such a small group of negritoes in the deep solitude of physical separation from the other countries obviously arouses the question as to how and wherefrom they came. The attributes of the Andamanese, prove very well their affinity with the negrito groups. Much to the curiosity of the observers, the tribal people of the Nicobar Islands do not show any affinity with the Andamanese culturally or materially and such contrasts are important aspects of anthropological study. However, the distribution of the negrito group in these isolated islands have been explained by some as the passage of the people from the Lower reaches of Burma and it is accepted with greater unanimity be-

1 Cipriani, L—On the origin of the Andamanese, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Census of India, 1961.

[113]

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

174 cause of reasonable grounds. In this s[illegible]for the origin, some one has gone so far as to advocate a shipwreck [illegible]ortuguese Negro slaves whose survivors ultimately became the Andamanese. A number of theories about the origin of the Andamanese have been put forward by the different authorities.

The idea of the shipwreck and the survival of the Portuguese Negro slaves can be discarded forthwith. The negroes of Africa, though physically very much akin to the Andamanese, present appreciable differences and secondly the date of arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean was 'only after the circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope, this would mean their coming sometime after the 15th Century, allowing not more than 500 years for the existence of the supposed shipwreck in the Andaman islands. The objections are 'great differences physi-
172 cally and materially from the people of Africa. Kitchen middens date
174 back to milleniums i.e. long before the arrival of the Portuguese anywhere in Asia."[1]

One of the very good clues for ascertaining the date of arrival of the Andamanese has been pointed out by Dr. Cipriani and he has conducted such a study in some parts of the Little Andaman and the Great Andamans. It is the study of the kitchen middens, that is, the accumulations of refuse, mostly of kitchen. Kitchen middens are fairly widespread and they are obviously the relics of a group of persons living in one spot. The kitchen middens, as they constitute the refuse of a group of persons, consist mostly of empty shells, nearly all bivalve, thrown after the contents have been eaten. The age of the kitchen midden can be calculated by counting the number of shells and the number that can be eaten by a person in one day. Cipriani writes that, 'Considering how many shells can be eaten everyday by one person and estimating the number of persons, that through the ages constituted to the formation of the deposit, it is possible to calculate the age of the kitchen middens, After the studies carried on the Onges we may say that every kitchen midden is formed as a result of the activities of a small 'group of some 30 to 40 persons who may frequent the spot for 40 to 50 days in a year. Their food is rarely formed of molluscs, they resort to these only when there is nothing to eat..... In this way many of the Andamanese accumulations, often huge, required a long period for their formation, a period to be calculated in thousands of years. Even if we reduce this number to half, the resulting antiquity

1 Ciprini, L—On the origin of the Andamanese, etc.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

is not in accordance with the opinion that the Andamanese are descendants of shipwrecked Portuguese Negro slaves.' Though this process seems to be very crude for the determination of the exact date of the arrival of the Andamanese, a rough guess can very well be made. Cipriani has also advocated the measurement of the residual radioactivity of charcoal at different levels for the determination of the antiquity of the Andamanese. It is quite obvious that further research in these lines in the future can only give us a more precise idea about the date of the arrival of the aborigines.

The region wherefrom the oborigines arrived and the route of their migration are also matters of considerable controversy. It is believed that the Andaman and Nicobar islands were connected by land with the Arakan folds of Burma in the late Tertiary period, but this is also not very certain. According to Brown, the authority on the anthropology of the Andamans, the negritoes migrated from the Arakan region of Burma if there had been any land connection and if not, they migrated, not by land, but by sea from the Burmese coast (Pegu or Arakan). Brown says, 'The N. E. Monsoon could drift them thence on to the Andamans. It is conceivable that they might have travelled from Sumatra by the way of the Nicobars but the N. E. Monsoon would have appeased their progress in this direction while the S. W. Monsoon would have driven them to the coast of the Andamans. It is hardly possible to imagine them coming from the Malaya Peninsula across the wide stretch of the Andaman Sea. The balance of possibility is in favour of the view that the Andamans were peopled either by land or by sea, from the region of the Lower Burma.'[1] It is probable that the negritoes moved from Burma either at a time when a direct land connection was achieved or when shallow waters in the sea facilitated movement by the rafts of the aborigines, but the former has been considered to be thoroughly untenable because of the absence of any mammalia in the Andamans and this proves that if at all there had been any land connection of Burma and Andamans, it must have been before the evolution of the mammalia. The deep sea researches of Molengraaf (1921) have been utilised by Kaudern (1939)[2] to interpret the probable routes of migration of the negritoes into the Andaman Islands. In the Quaternary period, there had been alternating glacial and interglacial periods because of the

1 Brown, A. R—The Andaman Islands.

2 Kaudern, W—Notes on the geographical distribution of the pygmies and their possible afflicties; Etno. Stud. g, 1939.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

174 change of the climate. In the glacial period, there had been a fall in
133 the level of the sea because of the fact that a great volume of water of the sea had transformed into ice. Hence in one such glacial period, as believed by Kaudern, there was a fall of 300 metres in the sea-level which established a direct contact with Burma facilitating the movement of the negritoes into the islands. But the absence of the Negrito group in the Nicobar Islands, only about 100 miles off the Andamans, invokes inquiry. This conspicuous absence of the negritoes in the Nicobars has been explained by Kaudern in this way:

'If the pygmies, when they migrated from the continent towards the south, were able to reach the former (the Andamans) but not the latter islands (the Nicobars), it meant that there has been at some time a fall of sea level of nearly 300 metres, but not as much as 800 metres in these tracts,[1] As the Ten Degree channel exists between the Andamans and the Nicobars, the movement of the Negritoes further south was stopped.

174 There has been an attempt of linking up some of the tales of Hindu Mythology, Ramayana with the land and people of the Andamans. Detection of such a link has been speculated in search of the origin of the aboriginal population. Though there is no room for doubt of the affinity of the aborigines of the Andamans with the negritoes, as established from the studies of the physical and cultural anthropology, Shri S. K. Gupta, though not an anthropologist, has been a strong advocate of the opinion that the aborigines of the Andamans are the 'kiratas' of Ramayana. He writes, 'According to modern anthropology they are of the negrito stock. But according to Ramayana they are kiratas. These kiratas have been described in our literature as shiny black, with a copper coloured head of hair (Tamramurdhaja), bulging eyes, strong teeth. The description recorded several thousands years ago, holds good to-day. All these tribes have copper coloured curly short hair growing as it were in separate insulated tufts."[2] Further knowledge about them is that they live on meat and fish.

The affinity of the Andamancse has been further confirmed by citing some native appellations of the Andamanese which show a striking phonetical similarity to those of the kiratas e.g., *Aka-kora* (*da*). *Aka-kede* (*da*), *Aka-kol* (*da*) etc and also the phonetical similarity of the Onge word *Boan* with Santal word *Bonga* both signifying God.

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[113] 1 Kaudern, W—Notes on the geographical distribution of the pygmies etc, Ethno. Stud. 9, 1939.

2 Gupta, S. K—Andaman & Nicobar Islands, 1951.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

Sri Gupta, in conclusion, has been tempted to emphasise with firm conviction that the Andamanese are, therefore, very probably a remnant of the dwellers on the marshes of Bengal and the uplands of Santhal Paragana or the dense forests of Burma and Malaya. 174

As regards the native appellations and phonetic similarity, such apparent similarity is possibly evidenced in many groups separated from each other by long distances. Similarly, the diet of raw meat and fish is and was common to all hunting and collecting tribes of the world. Independent evolution of many tribes has been akin to each other and therefore, the further geological studies and studies in anthropology can only confirm the idea.

Since the arrival of the Andamanese in the islands, a gradual separation has taken place among the different branches of population who had moved to different parts of the islands. The micro-environment has exerted considerable influence in moulding these people ultimately giving birth to a number of sub-groups. However, the broad generalisations are their hunting and collecting economy, complete ignorance about the domestication of the plants and the animals, except the Onges who have learnt only for the last 30 years the domestication of dogs. Family is the smallest social unit and a few families constitute the communal hut. Each tribal sub-group has its hunting territory, within which it maintains a more or less nomadic life till they return to the main settlement where they have a communal hut. 105 174 [592] [423]

The doctrine of the environmental determinism exemplifies itself in the adaptation of the aborigines to the local environment. In their life, they never look beyond their local geography and the materials for houses, the food, the ornaments and every thing that they are in need of, are collected from the small territory in which a community lives. So the obvious conclusion may be drawn that the coastal tribes are dependent on fishing, turtle hunting and gathering of shells and oysters and the interior tribes on hunting. This type of primitive economy, based on hunting and collecting, cannot support more than two to four persons per square mile as against more than 300 per square mile in agricultural lands and again the density varies to a great extent according to the type of agriculture practised e.g., rice-growing regions support the maximum density of population. In spite of their all-round self-sufficiency they have some connections with the later settlers. For the want of iron, tobacoo, distilled liquor, opium etc., these aborigines (jarawas) either make periodic raids on the settlements (Onges and Andamanese) or have established friendly relations with the settlers. The necessity 105 105 177 439

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

105 177 439 of all these things, locally not available, was felt by the aborigines only due to their slight contact with the later settlers.

However, a broad two-fold division of the aboriginal population can be made.

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1. Aborigines of the Great Andaman Group — All the aborigines of the Great Andamans with the exception of the Jarawas, the most hostile aborigines living in the southwestern part of the Andamans.

2. Aborigines of the Little Andaman Group — the Onges of the Little Andaman, the Jarawas of the South Andaman & the Sentinelese of the North Sentinel island.

As to how these two groups came into being and their areas of distribution, various theories have been put forward. Long after the attainment of the individual traits of these two groups, a continuous northward movement of the aborigines from the Little Andaman was in vogue and one such party had arrived in the Great Andamans who have been lately known as the Jarawas, who were all along subjected to pressure of the local natives belonging to the Great Andaman Group, the *Aka bea* of South Andaman. The very development of the hostility of the Jarawas and their complete seclusion from the other aboriginal groups owe to their being continuously subjected to the adversities. B. V. Eickstedt[1] has been of the opinion that the aborigines of the Andamans entered into the Great Andamans in two groups—the earlier group comprises the Onge, Jarawas and the Sentinelese while to the later group belong the ancestors of the Great Andaman Group. The passage of the Great Andaman Group has led to a constant southward push of the earlier group which has ultimately led to their habitation in the islands of the south i.e., the Little Andaman, Rutland Island and a part of the South Andaman. Cipriani has been emphatic enough in justifying the views of Brown that the Jarawas reached the Great Andamans from the south. Though they are supposed to have come from the Great Andamans by canoes, the art of constructing canoes and of using them have been completely forgotten and Cipriani believes that such instances of the loss of knowledge of the construction of canoes and their uses are many. A list of the names of the camps, given by Cipriani in the 1951 census, dating back to antiquity and having a good supply of drinking water and of

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1 Eickstedt, B. V — Die Negrite der Andaman (Anthro Ans).

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

food lie in a chain running from north to south along the islands between Little and Great Andamans. This has been one of the most convincing proofs of the movement of the aborigines from the south to the north. Cipriani writes, 'All these organisations, with geographical names, camps, places for water and food, indicate an ancient navigating experience moving from the south to the north. About a century and half ago the Jarawas are said to have still been in possession of canoes and the same is said of the savage inhabitants of the North Sentinel Island less than 50 years ago. In a surprisingly short period the technique of making canoes seems to have been completely forgotten as a result of the difficulties of using them."

THE ABORIGINES OF THE GREAT ANDAMAN GROUP

Andamanese, as they are called, were the most widespread and the largest in number. They had split up ultimately into a few sub-groups from the north to the south. The different groups are *Aka-kora, Aka-boa, Aka-jeru and Aka-bea.* There has been a deplorable decline in the number of these aborigines who in the bygone ages exceeded all other groups in number. At present the number is only 23, a considerable reduction from the number 625 only in the beginning of the 20th century. Though the present importance of the Andamanese because of the extremely poor number is far from significant, they are of no small interest for the study of the anthropologist, especially the impact of these people with the later settlers.

The consequences of the impact of the outsiders on the Andamanese have been far from satisfactory. With the formation of the penal colony, the aborigines continued to develop feud and on the 14th of May, 1959 a clash between the aborigines and the Govt. occurred which is known as the Battle of Aberdeen. Aberdeen is at the heart of the town of Port Blair. Efforts of pacifying these aborigines were made and for bringing them into closer terms of amity, the 'Andamanese Home' was started in 1863 by Rev. H. Corbyn Chaplain. They were employed for working with the convicts taught to speak English and wear clothes. The consequence of such an impact has been alarmingly devastating because of the infiltration of a number of vices and diseases which only paved the way for their impoverishment and decay (For further particulars see demographic characteristics).

2 Cipriani, L — On the origin of the Andamanese, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Census of India, 1951.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

have always been protected by the sea, which is almost invariably rough, and by a thick tropical forest which extends without a break over more than a thousand square kilometres, unpenetrated by outsiders and almost impenetrable.

THE ARIOTO

The decline of the Andamanese began with the first landing of foreigners on the island and is similar to that of so many other primitive peoples who have come into contact with civilization; a detailed account of their decline would be long and pitiful. In the case of the Andamanese, however, demographic influences arising thousands of years ago must also be taken into account. Cut off by circumstances into small groups and separated at random by large expanses of sea or by the impenetrable forest, they gradually developed somatic and cultural differences of the greatest scientific interest. Among other things, languages became modified to such an extent that members of different groups are unable to understand one another. The Onges, for example, who in my opinion are the nearest relations of the Jarawas, are quite unable to understand their language.

The peoples of Great Andaman were the first to encounter civilization, when from 1858 onwards the Indian Government, then in English hands, decided to institute at Port Blair a penitentiary for the many political prisoners after the famous 1857 mutiny. Subsequently the government sent over convicts serving long or life sentences. The life of the deportees was atrocious during the first few years, owing to malaria and the absence of medical supplies. To the majority, therefore, deportation to the Andamans meant a death sentence. Even today the only large brick building in the Andamans and Nicobars is the penitentiary at Port Blair.

Before the building of the penitentiary the English had made several desultory expeditions to the Andamans, and even before then other foreigners had landed on the archipelago. It is known that Marco Polo, probably passing within sight of the archipelago in 1292, gave it the name of Angaman, and declared the inhabitants to be ferocious cannibals with dogs' heads. As a result, even the Asian pirates were for centuries afraid to land on the islands. The barbarous forays of Arab slave traders later awoke in the islanders

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Arioto

in the local language, as opposed to the people of the interior, the *Eremtaga* – appear to have numbered between six and eight thousand. Over the years their place has been taken by more than thirteen thousand foreigners, most of whom were deportees, enjoying relative liberty as servants of government officials, farmers and foresters. The settlers, voluntarily or involuntarily, introduced the islanders to alcohol and tobacco, forcing them to turn to the foreigners in order to satisfy their craving. In the famous and extremely frank work of the English explorer M. V. Portman (*A History of our Relations with the Andamanese*, Calcutta, 1899) official letters are reproduced which give precise instructions in the matter to government officials. The result of these instructions was to transform the Arioto into alcohol and tobacco addicts. Syphilis was passed to the native women by the deportees, and from them to their men. When, a few years after the mass importation of prisoners, the government authorities became aware of the infection among the Arioto, not one of them had escaped. The miserable twenty-three survivors of the eight to nine thousand of a century ago show the ultimate result only too well, and their final extinction is imminent.

Before the advent of the new civilization, the Arioto had divided up into at least ten distinct communities, but without any true tribal organization. They respected a form of chief, chosen by tacit consent for his personal qualities rather than by name or by birth-right; but the chiefs acted merely as paternal advisers, to be respected in times of trouble, with no illusions of authority. No one commanded, and none obeyed: all were content to follow the whim of the moment, with no conception of social obligation.

When the foreigners arrived, there were five main groups of Arioto on North Andaman, the Cari, Chede, Cora, Jeru and Tabo. Another five groups were in South Andaman, the Balawa, Bea, Bogig-iab, Joi and Col. With the numerical decline of the Arioto, who had always been endogamous within their group, a tendency arose for the survivors to merge and inter-marry, so that the twenty-three alive today are in fact the result of the mixing of the northern and southern Arioto, and of these with Indians and Burmese. The chief of these twenty-three individuals is Loca, a name in itself an indication of this ethnic mixture. Loca means 'whiskers', and he himself has a moustache, whereas pure Negritos have no body or facial hair.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onges

Pesekem), although they are distinguished from them by profound cultural differences. These differences exist even between the three groups of Negritos. Whereas in Malacca and the Philippines they reflect the influx of superior cultures, these have had very little influence in the Andamans. For this reason the Andamanese have perforce remained more faithful to very ancient customs, and are also somatically the least altered.

The study of the last remaining groups, the Onges and Jarawas, now on the point of extinction if they are not protected, is thus a matter of singular urgency and significance.

We know nothing of how the Negritos arrived in their present homes with somatic and cultural characteristics quite distinct from those of any other human type. Apart from some dubious remains excavated in Indochina we do not even have any fossil remains to show their probable original distribution. There is, however, reason to believe that they were once very widely dispersed, judging from the evidence of their presence today as isolates widely separated from each other.

No traces of them remain in the continental areas adjacent to the Andamans, apart from the Malaccan peninsula. At one time it was thought that traces of a Negrito element were to be found in the Kadir of Hindustan, revealed by the occasional presence of curly hair. I have myself visited the area, and must refute this suggestion; the people have nothing of the Negrito in their body structure, their hair is markedly longer than the Negrito and they have body hair. The kinky hair (never woolly) occasionally seen may derive from distant Negro crosses, or may be an accidental similarity. I have seen this type of curliness even in Europeans who certainly had no Negro or pygmy ancestry.

It has also been asserted, possibly with some foundation, although there are few data available, that there are traces of the Negrito among the people of New Guinea, such as the Tapiro. Although of small stature, their general characteristics would seem to relate the Tapiro more closely to the Papuans; they have yellowish skin, probably the lightest in that area, they are, again, hirsute and there is a marked absence of Negrito characteristics in the proportions of the body.

The first thing that strikes one on meeting the Onges – and indeed the Andamanese in general – is the exceptional blackness and

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

twining up into the trees, and the shorter-stemmed yams, are never disturbed. The Onges merely dig down, at a respectful distance from the plant, certain of finding what they want. On no account must there be any signs of the theft for the spirit to see, so they quietly take off roots or tubers some way from the main stem and leave the rest, patting the earth down afterwards and covering the place with leaves. The guardian spirit, not, apparently, all-seeing, notices nothing, as the plant continues to flourish, improved by the root pruning. Everyone, guardian spirit and Onges alike, is happy.

This unconscious preservation may well be the result of a decree, in some remote past, by an Onge seer who realized the danger of killing off the entire plants and invented the guardian spirits as a deterrent. The Negritos still make similar use of roots and tubers; Skeet and Blagden fifty years ago referred to the Semang eating poisonous wild yams, having removed the toxic substances.[1]

It is interesting that both in the past and even today a number of peoples at a very early stage of cultural development have progressed from the gathering of the wild yams of South-East Asia to the first signs of cultivation and agriculture. It is possible that they were the first plants ever to be cultivated by primitive Man, the Negritos with their digging sticks delving then as they do now; the genus is certainly a very ancient one, and some species, such as *Dioscorea alata*, may have spread from Asia to Africa and Oceania, and even to America, with the beginning of cultivation. But this is a stage of development which the peoples of the Andaman never reached.

The digging stick, the only implement the Onges have with which to get at the roots and tubers, has in recent times been affected, though to a very limited extent by the spread of iron. Only a few individuals possess a primitive iron tool, half a metre long, cylindrical in shape and usually not more than one and a half centimetres in diameter and flattened into a form of blade at one end. The vast majority still have only the age-old stick made of hard wood, hardly recognizable as a tool and crudely fashioned into a point at one end. This tool, so primitive that it can easily be mistaken for an odd

[1] It is interesting that the American Aborigines, especially in Brazil, do the same with manioc, but I saw nothing of this nature in the Andamans.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

178 392 also acquired more recent additions, so that any primitive ignorance on their part of an art so ancient and generally advantageous as that of making fire is hardly credible. One thing is, however, certain: they do not today know how to produce fire.

● 174 178 In order to explain their ignorance, one must remember the surprising speed with which primitive peoples forget even essential facts, even details of their own life. They can forget their father's or mother's name, or both, and important events of less than fifty years ago are sometimes forgotten by those who took part in them. Cultural regression following the forgetting of ethnographical facts, even essential facts such as the making of fire, is a phenomenon widespread in every continent. Widely differing elements of culture spread out from a number of centres and were forced to adapt to natural surroundings often incomparably different from the centre from which they spread. Sometimes these cultural migrations led to progress, but more often to regression. Particularly in the marginal areas furthest from the centres of culture, enforced modifications were profound, with ensuing cultural impoverishment. The Andamanese, probably arriving from areas to the east, remain as survivors of a series of disasters both biological and non-biological, in one of the marginal areas which, although a natural paradise, has been most affected by adverse circumstances. It is, therefore, hardly surprising if, like the Eskimos, they no longer reflect the brilliance of the past, either biologically or culturally. A similar situation is to be found in populations much larger and more advanced than the Andamanese.

105 It is not strictly accurate to define the Onges as primitive; they should more properly be regarded as involuted. They possess certain essentials which almost entitle them to recognition as a civilized people: religious concepts are not unknown, they bury their dead, they are monogamous, and they have their own language. While they are unable to produce fire they can preserve it and know how to use it, they make excellent bows, arrows, harpoons and canoes, and they know how to produce pottery.

Nevertheless, they have no agriculture, and do not keep domestic animals except the dog, introduced only within living memory and to them a faithful friend. They have no idea of the use of metals, and make no stone implements apart from the tiny splinters used for shaving. They have never developed any graphic arts and have

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

only a crude form of body decoration based on geometrical designs.

They are, therefore, to be included among the most backward peoples of mankind, who have remained in a very simple form of social structure. They have never progressed to any elementary organization of themselves into 'clans', or even 'tribes'. They have, in short, the psychological outlook and concepts of other primitive peoples, modified by local conditions. The evidence in favour of the Onges of today being the product of cultural development over a very long period appears to me overwhelming, though their development has already been hindered by involution and, we must presume, a series of setbacks.

The Onges have thus remained culturally isolated and this has deprived them of the opportunities offered to the rest of the world. The time came when they ceased to receive or to elaborate new concepts, and from that point regression was inevitable. There is abundant evidence that their culture dates back to Palaeolithic times, so that they now represent the last and decadent expression of a very lengthy stage of biological and cultural development, a point of arrival, and not one of departure. Everywhere in the Andamans there are signs of an ancient culture which must once have spread over much of the world. It is neither logical nor practical to explain the similarity of many concepts as a series of convergences, all of independent origin; ideas must have spread outwards with the passage of time and the gradual population of habitable areas.

No study of present-day life on the Andamans can be complete without an attempt to build up a valid picture of the islands as they were centuries ago, and this we can do with some accuracy by a study of the kitchen-middens. These abound on Great Andaman, but few have been excavated, and then only briefly reported. Those of Little Andaman have not, for obvious reasons, previously been investigated, but they are of considerable importance for the light they cast on their own development and history, and on that of similar mounds outside the Andamans. It is only on Little Andaman that they are still being built up, continually increasing in size, forming a unique, direct and continuous link with life on the island thousands of years ago.

Provided they have not been damaged – for example by rain or

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

If we may deduce from the evidence of the middens, pottery arrived in the Andamans at the same time as the pig, bones of which appear only in the upper levels; but we know nothing of the people responsible for the introduction of either. It is, however, certain that both arrived in Great Andaman and Little Andaman together.

There are indications that Little Andaman was the first to feel the benefit of pottery, possibly introduced by a light-skinned people. There are, as I have said, significant variations of skin colour and stature among the Onges; some have markedly lighter skins than the other islanders, and one would assume that this feature entered Little Andaman from the Nicobars with the unknown people who brought with them pottery and the pig. The people as an entity have disappeared as a result of inter-marriage with the indigenous population, while pigs reverted to the wild state and flourished, even spreading from one island to another by swimming (I can vouch for this, having seen them do it).[1]

The indications are that there were migrations from Little Andaman to Great Andaman long before those from which the Jarawas derive. In certain respects they resemble the Onges, whereas the surviving Arioto appear to represent a purer stock. The Onges seem to have acquired foreign blood in relatively recent times, perhaps when pigs and pottery appeared, when the kitchen-middens of Great Andaman were already being built up by the Arioto, but before the migration northwards by which the Jarawas reached their present home. Much more intensive investigation of the middens will, however, be needed before these hypotheses can be confirmed.

At Golpahar there were within the midden five graves containing human bones, not in anatomical position, and clearly filled in with fresh earth. I was surprised to find only the long bones, skulls and jawbones; the remaining bones could not be found. This may be explained by the custom among the Arioto (still prevailing

[1] One thing is puzzling: the three remaining groups of primitive Negritos in Malacca and the Philippines have the arrow harpoon with a detachable head. This is particularly valuable in the forests against the pigs, which cannot escape into the undergrowth once they have been hit. But it is difficult to see how or why the arrow harpoon reached the Andamans, where there were at that time no large mammals. It seems necessary to postulate the former spread of the weapon with the Negritos over a very wide area and its use against a much wider range of animals.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966. AZ2 Andamans AZ2

position by reed cords, which were to be tied in front of the snout, ending in a cord by which the skull was to be hung above the hunter's bed. No sooner said than done, and at the beginning of 1954 all the old trophies were thrown out into the forest, to be gradually replaced by the new ones. Fortunately I had collected some of the old trophies before the 'revelation'!

From the evidence of the middens it would appear that these variations in burial customs have no practical basis, and probably all derive from similar 'revelations'. Further investigations in a large series of the deposits, enabling dated comparisons to be made, would be extremely revealing.

Even allowing for these sudden alterations in established customs, it is clear that their elaboration indicates slow and hardly perceptible development over long periods of time and the middens must be dated in millennia. The hypothesis put forward by some scholars that the Andamanese are descended from negro slaves who escaped while on their way to the Portuguese colonies in India in the sixteenth or, at the earliest, fifteenth centuries, seems therefore quite untenable, in face of the abundant evidence in favour of the great antiquity of the middens and of the people who built them up.

It seems clear that during the last few thousand years, successive waves of migration have taken place over a whole area bounded on the west by the Andamans and Nicobars. All indications point to a close connection between the Andamanese and the peoples to the westward, the Negrito element remaining alone and almost untouched in the Andamans, but becoming submerged in the Nicobars into the mongoloid element of more recent origin. Even today a number of Nicobarese show signs of Negrito ancestry; short in stature, they have crinkly hair which although long is very different from the straight black hair of the mongoloid element, and their heads, noses and lips bear clear signs of Negrito ancestry.

In addition to these more general conclusions the middens also cast some light on the origin, still somewhat problematical, of the wretched Jarawas of Great Andaman. Comparisons between their middens and those of the Onges show that there were in the past communal huts on Great Andaman exactly the same as those still extant today on Little Andaman.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

The continual fighting between the Eremtaga and the Arioto led, as we have seen, to the gradual disappearance of the communal huts of the latter as being too vulnerable. Subsequently, the conflict still going on between foreigners and Jarawas completed the destruction, so that there are now no communal huts on Great Andaman. The ever-increasing violence of the punitive expeditions against the Jarawas put an end to their numerical recovery during the last fifteen years or so, and there may indeed now be none left. Today only their kitchen-middens, and the surviving Onges, remain to show us how the Jarawas must have lived.

The Jarawa middens are distinguishable from those of the Arioto by their inland position and by their content of freshwater shellfish and land gasteropods, not eaten by the peoples of the coast.

Like the kitchen-middens of the Onges, those of the Jarawas contain human bones clearly interred in graves, and not scattered among the refuse. This refutes the Arioto accusation against the Eremtaga of cannibalism, and that of the people of South Andaman (now vanished) against the people of North Andaman and the Onges; the remains of cannibal feasts would undoubtedly have been found among kitchen refuse and not carefully buried in the ritual manner, with the graves filled in with earth. And the Jarawas and the majority of the Arioto buried their dead in the communal huts, continuing a custom which originated while they were still on Little Andaman. In time variations arose, but this does not alter the evidence in favour of migration in ancient times from the south, via the Nicobars and Little Andaman.

The differences in culture between the islands can be explained by the ease with which primitive peoples forget. The Jarawas, for example, although they reached Great Andaman by sea from Little Andaman, forgot in a few generations the art of hollowing canoes when they were forced to live in the depths of the forests, far from the sea. Today, they have been free from the Arioto for some time, at least on the west coast, and have access to the sea, but they have not started building canoes again. In other things, however, such as burial rites, the Jarawas kept faithful to the old Onge customs; their middens show the same exhumation of the bones, the same cleaning, and tinting with ochre, and careful reburial.

The general similarity of the middens in Great and Little Andaman cannot be due to chance. Animal food, for example, has clearly

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

they may be, and the strays of the Andaman forests howl unceasingly. Even in the Onge encampments the dogs howl enough to wake their sleeping masters; the only way to stop the noise is for the Onges to forestall it by taking their dogs into the family bed, fleas and all. There ensues silence, warmth and more fleas!

Hunting weapons of the Andamanese, the Semang and the Aetà were originally made by all three peoples in a similar way, common to all the Negritos. None have any defensive weapons as such; their bows and arrows, never feathered, serve as arms as well as for hunting and fishing. Shields are unknown and spears, rare in the Andamans and among the Semang, are apparently no longer in use among the Aetà; where they exist they are usually mainly for hunting. All three peoples, however, have the arrow harpoon.[1]

Their bows are all clearly derived from the same source. In the Andamans, only the Onges and Jarawas have remained true to the original form, local variations arising at a later date, and they afford additional evidence in favour of Little Andaman being the original springboard from which the Negritos entered Great Andaman.

All the Negritos make their bows from one piece of wood stripped longitudinally from the living trunks of large trees such as *Mimusops littoralis* or *Pterocarpus dalbergoides*. After they have been left to season the strips are patiently fashioned into the required shape; for this the Onges use the shells of *Cyrena* (the freshwater species, which are tougher). The bows are straight, thicker in the middle and gradually tapering towards the ends, and are usually 1·6 metres long, although there are exceptions. The cross section is the same throughout the length of the bow, varying from three or four centimetres diameter at the centre to two and a half centimetres at the horns. The inner surface is so slightly curved as to be almost flat, while the back is markedly convex. The blunt horns end in a 'shoulder and neck' stop to take the string, the neck projecting about one and a half centimetres beyond the shoulders – enough to hold the bowstring. The shoulder is formed by strips of *Ficus* bark wound round the bow, or the yellow fibres of *Dendrobium*; one shoulder is invariably larger than the other. The string itself, made from long thin strips of *Ficus* bark twisted together, has a very narrow loop on one end and a larger one at the other;

[1] See p. 86.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

becomes more complex; the upper horn is more pointed than the lower, and there is a difference between the upper and lower halves of the bow, as it is necessary to prevent the loops of the strings slipping on the bow. The bow string is made not from *Ficus* bark, as in the Onge bow, but from thin *Anadendron* fibres, twisted together and waxed with beeswax; it has the usual loop at each end, and the bow is strung with the help of the foot as in the simpler version. When strung, this type of bow becomes S-shaped as a result of the variations in elasticity arising from the spear-shape of the two halves, but when drawn it assumes the normal shape. The fact that it is easier to draw an S-bow than a single-curve one, without any loss of propulsive force, is an interesting mechanical point.

The bows are only strung when required for use, and in the normal way neither they nor the arrows are ever seen by outsiders; they disappear up into the roof of the communal hut, or into the bushes round the temporary camps. Even with friendly Onges I had to ask specifically to see them, or surprise their owners out hunting.

The external influences to which the Semang and Aetà have been subjected have been strong enough to make them to a large extent forget their original form of bow, which has however survived alongside a large number of cultural inovations. The differences, for example, between the upper and lower extremities of both bow and string have persisted, and the shoulder-and-neck stop (although this is now made by notching the bow-stave deeply) so that we may reasonably assume that a close study of the Onge bow will give us the essential characteristic of a very ancient form of the weapon. The greatest modification to the original form is the one which has been made on North Andaman, and in an attempt to improve the effect of separate curving of the two sections selected trees are deliberately trained for the purpose, the cut wood being seasoned slowly over heat and smoke, paying particular care to the parts which will take the greatest strain. As a result the 'give' in the bow is markedly increased. But even here no fundamental alteration has been made in the design of the weapon.

The Onge bow, therefore, represents the forerunner of the somewhat more highly evolved type (now dying out with their owners) on Great Andaman, and adds further support to the evidence for

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

the arrival of the Negritos in the Andamans from the south; yet more evidence is provided by the Onge arrows. In the Andamans there are two types of arrows, those used for fish, and those for game, the latter also being used against human targets.

The same arrows are found throughout the archipelago, confirming a common origin. Only the dimensions vary from one area to another and that only very slightly; the Onges have both the biggest fishing arrows, and the biggest arrow harpoons, and the Arioto the smallest. In the past the islanders used arrows with from two to four points for fish, but I was unable to find any traces of them; those picked up on North Sentinel some years ago were possibly the last to be made.

The fishing arrow of the Andamans is made basically from the small native bamboo. The Onges remove the knots by scraping them down gradually with *Cyrena* shells, and then cut off a length varying between seventy centimetres and about one metre. Into one end they fix securely a hardwood stick, fifteen to twenty centimetres long. This foreshaft takes the head, now nearly always iron, but in the past made of wood, fish spines or pig bone. In the kitchen-middens I also found heads made out of shaped pieces of *Tridacna*. The three parts of the arrow are then bound together with very thin waxed fibres, wound carefully round and round, great care being taken to prevent the bamboo shaft splitting where the foreshaft is forced in. The completed arrow finishes up 1–1·15 metres long overall. The head is barbed, to hold the fish once it is hit; to get it out the whole arrow has to be pulled through. Sometimes, but not always, the shaft has a notch in it, to take the cord, care being taken to make the notch never more than two centimetres from any knot, to avoid any possibility of the shaft splitting. Alternatively, splits are prevented by binding waxed thread tightly round the shaft.

The hunting arrow, or arrow harpoon, is an intelligent adaptation, the result of acute observation of wild life, and is more complicated than the fishing arrow which is intended only to pierce the victim. The hunting arrow must not only score a hit, it must also prevent the animal from escaping into the undergrowth and force it to reveal its position. The harpoon holds the victim cruelly and securely, and the excruciating pain caused by the drag of the cord forces the animal to reveal its position by its cries of agony. The

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

The widespread use of the arrow and spear harpoons since very ancient times is evidenced by their survival in areas far removed from each other, and among primitive peoples geographically completely isolated. The arrival of the harpoon in the Andamans must in all probability have occurred thousands of years ago when it was widespread at least in the south and south-east of the Asian continent. Even the Andamanese canoes with their platforms fore and aft built specially for the harpoon throwers indicate not only the antiquity of the islanders, but also their historical and cultural connection with the peoples represented today by the few remaining Negritos.

From the evidence of the middens it is clear that the links between the Onges and the Jarawas are very close. While the date of the first migration from Little Andaman to Great Andaman remains uncertain there can be no doubt that migrations took place, followed by isolation within the islands, until today the Arioto cannot understand the Eremtaga, and the Onges neither the Jarawas nor the Sentinellese. There is very little in the literature on the Jarawas and their origin, but from my own observations I would deduce that they arrived in Great Andaman comparatively recently, as even their subsequent rigid isolation has not brought about any really essential cultural differences from the Onges.

The route of the migration will undoubtedly have led them via Rutland, whose heights can be seen as an open invitation from the north of Little Andaman. Chains of small, uninhabited islands lie between; the Onges have a name for all of them and have camp sites there for use on hunting or fishing expeditions; the Arioto, on the other hand, do not appear ever to have been to the islands. From Rutland migrations would have moved on to Great Andaman, until, filtering through to the extreme north, they became the Jarawas, or 'strangers', as the Arioto still call them. The Arioto themselves probably arrived previously by the same route but stopped in the coastal areas, then uninhabited and inviting occupation. The Arioto would have considered themselves owners of the still uninhabited areas and tried to exclude later immigrants; so began the hostility I have already described between the occupiers of the coasts and the later arrivals whom they forced into the depths of the forests.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

All the evidence points to this being far more than mere supposition and even today the Onges persist in their tendency to expand towards the north. In 1953 I could find no trace of a number of Onges whom I had known in 1952; the others told me they were all 'dead', but it seems probable that they had migrated to the islands further north. And in 1954 nearly all the canoes belonging to the communal huts in the south-west of Little Andaman, which I had seen in 1953, had vanished and were said to have gone with the 'dead'. It is probable that they too had migrated to Great Andaman, becoming 'Jarawas'.

This is physically quite possible. Between Little Andaman and Great Andaman the Onges have a line of transit camps, still in use, where food and water are easily available. All have a name, and I followed the line myself. With the help of their fragile but very fast canoes, and without carrying food or water (which they know will be available at the next transit camp), they can travel very quickly. They take fire with them in the canoes in the form of a burning torch and while they are at sea, unlike the lazy pace of their normal attitude to life, they seem possessed by the desire to reach the next stopping point on terra firma.

Moreover, one may deduce from the fact that the names of these transit camps are all in the Onge language that the migrations have always been from south to north. Little Andaman, formed as it is mainly of coral banks and only projecting a short way above the sea, disappears from view in the tropical mists a few kilometres from the shore; from Rutland it is invisible, and as the Andamanese only travel by sea with land in sight or when its existence and direction is well known, no one from the north would have dared to travel south into the unknown.

We have already seen that the ignorance of the present-day Jarawas as regards the sea is no bar to a hypothesis of their original arrival in Great Andaman by sea. Colebrook, a hundred and fifty years ago, actually saw them with canoes, and Gilbert Rogers[1] recorded seeing canoes on the coasts of North Sentinel very similar to those of the Onges today. The accumulation, therefore, of this evidence and the general similarity of culture throughout the archipelago all adds up to inescapable conclusions.

Even the unique dances enjoyed by the Onges are to be seen

[1] *Andaman and Nicobar Gazetteer*, 2 January 1904.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Even the unique dances enjoyed by the Onges are to be seen among the Jarawas, with the characteristic marking of the rhythm by slapping the calves against the buttocks. This does not seem to have been a feature of the Arioto dances, in which the rhythm was by the *pukuta yemnga*, a kind of convex shield made of the very hard and aromatic red wood (*Pterocarpus dalbergoides*) which the termites never seem to attack. I was able to obtain one of these shields, the last that the twenty-three surviving Arioto possessed and the only musical instrument in the islands. It is played by one man with his feet, while the dancers, male and female, form lines on each side of him a short distance away. Before use the convex face is decorated with lines of white ochre and chains of tusk shells are hung from a hole at the end opposite to the one on which the player's feet beat; from the same hole runs a cord, which he holds in his hand to prevent the instrument moving away from him as he beats. The players change from time to time as the dancers shuffle on and on for hours in the light of the resin torches. But apart from the instrument itself, the rhythmic hand-clapping and the dancers singing in unison are the same throughout the Andamans.

The women clap their hands in rhythm, and then slap one thigh with the open palm of one hand, the other hand clasping the wrist, singing all the time. The men dance in Indian file, beating the ground first with the right heel, then with the left, the toes barely raised from the ground, moving a short way forward each time. As they dance they lean forward, then with hands clasped and their fingers interlaced. There are variations, but the basic step is always the same.

One difference between the Onges and the Jarawas is that in the latter both sexes are naked, while the Onge women have in recent times adopted the *naquineghe* or apron. Complete nudity was a characteristic of all the Negritos, including the Semang and Aetà, and the Jarawa migrations probably took place before the introduction of the *naquineghe*.

The present inability of the three peoples to understand each other is more a question of pronunciation than of difference in actual words. To examine the question fully it would be necessary to collect a large number of words and analyse their affinity; meanwhile we know that despite their inability to understand each other there is a close resemblance between the language of the Jarawas and Sentinellese and that of the Onges. Strict isolation can lead to

comparatively rapid variation and it is now difficult to establish their linguistic connections outside the Andamans, but Africa can certainly be discounted, in view of the general weight of evidence against any Negro ancestry.

Like the Onges the Jarawas are divided into endogamous groups, each with its own name, corresponding to their communal huts, and each with their own territory for the purposes of hunting, fishing and gathering food. There is little reliable information about their daily life or even their numbers; it is, however, certain and I cannot overstress this, that the Jarawas are Negrito in type,[1] with the same admixture as in the Onges.

Whoever or whatever they may be, the replacement of primitive expeditions by genuine attempts at pacification would, quite apart from the obvious humanitarian considerations involved, afford a unique opportunity for detailed study of a dying population in regeneration, and the refusal of an otherwise irrevocable progress towards final extinction.

But the problem of the Jarawas is merely one aspect of the problem of the Andamanese in general, and their connection with the Negritos both past and present. The Semang and the Aetà, as we have seen, resemble each other, and together resemble the Andamanese, in a number of essential points. Recent contacts with other influences in Malacca and the Philippines respectively have produced variations – such as the Semang use of traps and snares with which they take small animals, and also birds, which the Andamanese never touch. They have also taken to making refuges in the trees as a defence against wild animals, non-existent in the Andamans. Traps, poison, agriculture, fish-hooks, animal nets, are all late acquisitions, not found among the original Negritos. It was thought by Brown that spears, used by the Semang, were also unknown among the peoples of the Andamans, but I have myself seen them used by the Onges, though admittedly I saw only a few, and very rough specimens; I did, however, manage to bring some back with me.

In the case of the canoes, the Semang and the Aetà seem to have

[1] On 11 January 1951 a Jarawa was killed at Lekenlarta on Middle Andaman and the head is now in the Indian Museum in Calcutta. This head shows signs of beard, unlike those of two Jarawas held in the Nicobars since the September 1938 incident. Short, muscularly well-developed, strong and very black, Jarawas are normally beardless, as is usual in Negritos.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Unity of the Negritos

174 It appears that the Andamanese, before their migration to the archipelago, copied from other Asiatic and Oceanic peoples customs and rites whose origin and meaning were unknown to them. They went on and on observing these rites blindly, till they gradually degenerated to their present rudimentary form. In the Onges of today they seem like mere superstitions, badly digested importations, far from any of their original meaning. The process is a phenomenon which has occurred over and over again among primitive peoples who come in contact with other, to their eyes superior, cultures. They feel an urge to imitate something, as it were, more elegant, and so come to follow the new ways out of habit. I have seen the effects of this both in Africa and in Asia, particularly as the result of contact with European influences.

The practice of vivisecting animals for food, for instance, was widespread throughout the world, frequently in connection with certain ideologies, although these were not usually based on pure superstition. Rituals which to us are horrible beyond measure are seen by primitive peoples from childhood merely as a necessary part of cooking or the acquisition of food. And yet such practices are found also in peoples with a culture considerably beyond the primitive. Some cannibals, for example, are relatively advanced; there are in fact some cannibal peoples who have reached the stage of agriculture. The Andamanese, however, are far behind that stage of development, and they have never acquired the ideologies leading to cannibalism. One can only accept that they do genuinely believe that in practising vivisection they are acting for the common and the individual good.

224 There is an established and closely observed order of precedence

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Brown states that dugong skulls are found among the hunting trophies of the Andamanese. I can myself vouch for the fact that this is not the case among the Onges or the twenty-three surviving Arioto; both keep dugong jaws and long bones, but the skulls of only pigs and turtles. The Andamanese in general do not regard animal bones as having the same protective powers as human; the existence in the Andamans of any magical practices connected with either animal or human bones has not, in my view, been adequately proved. In the absence of such proof I feel unable to agree with the authors who assert that these practices do exist, and I am inclined to feel that the cultural level of the peoples of the Andamans is so low as to rule out the existence of magic or witchcraft in any form.

From the mass of data of all kinds I was able to collect on my trips to the Andamans, a general pattern emerges from which it is possible to draw substantial conclusions as to the cultural and somatic origins of the Onges and hence of the other peoples of the archipelago. To summarize these conclusions must inevitably involve some repetition of what has been said in previous chapters.

Taking first the people of the Nicobar Islands, the nearest geographically to the Andamanese, it is generally accepted that with the exception of the Shom-Pen of Great Nicobar the Nicobarese are culturally closely similar. Although there are no pure Negrito types in the Nicobars there are evident crosses, similar to those which appear in one area of Sumatra to the east, where a small Negrito component exists among a predominantly mongoloid type. This may well be the result of the Negritos having spread at one time over a very wide area and there is in fact cultural evidence in support of the suggestion.

The mongoloid somatic type of the Nicobars appears in the general shape and proportions of the body, skin colour, facial contours, and the hair, which is long and straight, unlike that of the Negritos. Both types, however, have scant body hair, and differ in this respect from the pygmies of Africa.

Although the size and skin colour of most Nicobarese is very different from the Onges, a few are strikingly like them in facial contours, size, and woolly hair. There are also legends of a people who lived in the Nicobars long ago, small, very black, with tight

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

curly hair; on Car Nicobar I was taken to a cave[1] where these people are said to have lived. The ethnographical evidence is such that there may well be some truth in the legend. The close similarity in detail, even identity, of the Onge and Nicobar canoes, and spiralled pottery, the presence in the wild state of the pig – the sum of this and other evidence cannot be overlooked. Car would have been the last point before the Andamans in the Negrito advance from the east. They would have remained on Car for a long time before moving on to the Andamans, and since Car is a completely flat coral deposit, with no true stone at all, it may be assumed that it was during their sojourn on Car that the Negritos lost the art of working it; this would explain the complete absence of stone implements in the Andamans.

The Negritos would thus have occupied the Nicobars before the mongoloids, and were then, as the somatic evidence shows, partially absorbed, or moved on to the Andamans. The burial customs and superstitions of the Andamanese reflect Nicobar influence with disinterment, reburial and retention of certain bones; such customs are also found sporadically in Oceania. Ritual governing hunting trophies is also very similar, as are weapons. The three-pointed arrow was found in both the Nicobars and the Andamans until comparatively recently; the Onges have none now, but their descendants – the Sentinellese and Jarawas – still used them very recently. Both the Nicobarese and the peoples of the Andamans (also various peoples in Indonesia and Oceania) cook without any form of salt. This is also the case in certain islands of the west coast of Sumatra, where there are also other similarities from huts to

[1] On 20 April 1952, I visited this cave with Sri B. S. Cengappa, head of the 1952 Nicobar Expedition; in the report of the expedition he did me the honour of naming the cave 'Cipriani Cave'. A schoolmaster on Car Nicobar told me of other caves in the archipelago, which had similar traditions of occupation in very ancient times. One facing the sea on the east coast of Catcial, one of the Nancowry group, was of considerable size, about a hundred metres long and fifteen metres high, and wider, its floor covered in a layer of guano. The same guano covered the floor of Cipriani Cave, which lies in a coral formation little more than ten metres above present sea-level. It has two openings, diametrically opposite and thirty-five metres apart. The cave consists of a wide central chamber, about seven metres in diameter, with many stalactites and stalagmites. Fortunately none of the archaeological deposit was damaged by the Japanese occupation and the traditions attached to the cave remain alive among the Nicobarese. It would need at least ten men working for at least six months to investigate the cave properly, but I am sure that the results would amply justify the cost of such an expedition.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

head ornaments and religious ceremonies. In Oceania there is, too, the habit of changing personal names from time to time so prevalent among the Onges, and the existence of actual linguistic connections between Nicobarese, Andamanese, Semang, Aetà and peoples of Oceania have been demonstrated by experts.

Any differences which exist today are the result of centuries of contact with other peoples which the Semang and Aetà have experienced, unlike the Andamanese, who thus represent today the true Negritos. While life generally has changed somewhat over the centuries for the Semang and Aetà, certain typical facets of their culture have remained unaltered. Ritual cutting and distributing of game, the use of the arrow harpoon (always unfeathered) and the simple Onge-Negrito bow are still the same, despite the fact that the three groups have been separated for a very long time. Even the very absence of defensive weapons is a common feature; admittedly outside the Andamans arrows are poisoned and some may be feathered, but this is a recent and imitative innovation which is not found among the Andamanese, by virtue of their constant isolation. The persistence among the Onges of the simple bow tends to support the idea of Little Andaman as the first stage in the northward spread of the Negritos after they reached the island from Sumatra via the Nicobars. In Malacca the Semang have retained the same bow, as have the Aetà in the Philippines.

Among what may be termed similarities of physical habits is nose-rubbing as a sign of affection, found in the Andamans, in Oceania, and parts of Papuasia and Melanesia. In all these areas there is the same belief that pregnancy is due to entry of a spirit into the body, and the same habit of suckling children for as long as four years. Similar too throughout the area are the methods of 'curing' disease, such as smearing with ochre and heavy massage carried out beside a fire, swallowing of balls of ochre, and the 'smoking' of wounds, smeared with a mixture of ochre and honey. As protection from the sun or the rains (especially for the young children) crude umbrellas are made from giant palm leaves.

There are no prayers or propitiatory sacrifices to ensure health and well being, but there is throughout the area the same concept of mysterious forces to be feared, evaded, or let loose against enemies – never loved. Generally they are thought of in terms of spirits, usually active at night. There is some divergence in the

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

most striking of these is ambidexterity. This is the general rule in the Onges and also appears as a normal trait in the primitive peoples of Oceania, America and Asia. Another physical characteristic of the Onges, reported also in Tasmans and various peoples of Oceania, is the early onset of ageing in both sexes; in the Tasmans the women are rarely fertile after the age of thirty, and this is also probably the case with the Onges. Unlike the Tasmans, however, the Onges, though sharing their very black skin colour, have among other physical differences markedly scant body hair. A study of their blood groups by Dr H. Lehmann (see also Mourant) has moreover lent very considerable support to the external physical evidence in favour of a relationship between the Andamanese and the people of Oceania, both past and present.

From the anthropological point of view perhaps the most outstanding feature of all these peoples is that despite their extreme aggressiveness towards outsiders their corporate sense is such that they have no need of leaders to give orders. Rarely are there hereditary leaders; such as they are, their leaders are chosen on the basis of outstanding powers, such as supposed clairvoyance, as in the Andamanese.

The Andamanese themselves know nothing of their origins, lost in the mists of time, and it is for us to trace them, working back along the paths cleared by the anthropologist, the ethnographer and the archaeologist. They represent today the survival, almost unchanged, of a culture once to be found all over Oceania, spread thousands of years ago by canoes hardly different from those the Onges use today. They carried the unknown seamen from island to island, bearing with them a way of life which in the Andamans at least was never to change – a point of arrival, rather than of departure. Driven in on themselves by circumstances of geography just as other circumstances now unknown had driven them there originally, they have remained isolated, dwindling in numbers over the centuries, until they were discovered by the modern world. Their reception of outsiders, however they come and whoever they may be, is aggressive; consciously or unconsciously the Andamanese seek to preserve the only way of life they know. And who can be sure they are wrong?

No one could deny the demographic decadence of the islanders,

islanders, in the absence of any means of working it, have not fully realized.

3 IGNORANCE OF FIRE

The islanders' present ignorance of fire-making may possibly be the result of cultural decline, but this is not certain. In the presence of the considerable additional evidence in favour of the antiquity of the Andamanese culture it is, however, more likely that it is genuine ignorance, persisting in a pre-lithic people.

4 ABSENCE OF SALT

Although there can be no proof, it can be reasonably postulated that very primitive Man had no salt, and that in the Andamans this ignorance has persisted over thousands of years, owing to strict isolation. It is unlikely that the use of salt would have been completely lost, had it ever been introduced.

5 PRIMITIVE METHODS OF COOKING

Apart from the accidental and very recent introduction of petrol-drum cooking, the Andamanese use only the most primitive form of earth oven. This method of cooking was certainly known in the Palaeolithic era; at the entrance to the well-known Barma Grande cave near Mentone I have myself seen in the basal layers a number of stones bearing the marks of fire, too numerous merely to have formed some sort of hearth, and clearly not used to support cooking-pots, as Palaeolithic Man had none which would have withstood heat. The form of earth oven still used throughout the Andamans is undoubtedly of extreme antiquity.

6 FOOD VESSELS

The people of the Andamans still use for honey hollowed-out logs similar to those seen in Palaeolithic wall paintings, which also depict baskets very like those still in use throughout the archipelago. The art of basket-making can be traced back at least to the later Palaeolithic era.

7 USE OF POTTERY

As with the other Negrito peoples, pottery was unknown in the earliest culture of the Andamans. Its appearance seems from the evidence of the

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

kitchen-middens to have been contemporaneous with the introduction of the pig, i.e. to have been introduced by outsiders. It would be possible, using radio carbon methods, to calculate this date more accurately, but on purely archaeological evidence the introduction of pottery would appear to have occurred some five thousand years ago.

8 ABSENCE OF CANNIBALISM

If we may accept the evidence of the kitchen-middens, there has never at any time been cannibalism in the Andamans, although the practice certainly existed in the later Palaeolithic era; the Andamanese must thus have been isolated in the archipelago long before the practice became widespread.

9 DRINK

The Andamanese ignorance of any drink other than water may be regarded as additional evidence of the great antiquity of their culture.

10 ABSENCE OF CLOTHING

The Jarawas of both sexes have always remained completely naked. The Onges have only in comparatively recent times adopted a form of genital covering for their womenfolk; this custom has spread as far as the north of Great Andaman, and it seems probable that the separation of the Jarawas from the Onges dates from this time.

11 ABSENCE OF TATTOOING

All primitive peoples who are habitually completely naked adorn the body in some way. The Onges have never progressed beyond the early stage of painting themselves with ochre, and do not tattoo. Their sole ornaments are small necklaces of tusk shells, strips of bark, and sometimes flowers. In all this they resemble the Tasmans (see, however, p. 143 for certain important differences), who seem to have remained in an equally early stage of cultural development.

12 TOTEMISM AND THE CLAN

Here again the complete absence of any traces appears to indicate isolation before the spread of these very ancient concepts. Neither the Onges nor the Jarawas have ever progressed beyond the stage of independent groups of families.

groups of families. There is some spontaneous recognition of individuals as 'headmen' as a result of some generally accepted superiority of physique or discernment, but the concept goes no further than the giving of some weight to their views within the group.

13 MARRIAGE

The Onges are monogamous, like all peoples who have never progressed beyond the stage of hunting and gathering, and adultery is virtually unknown. Marriage consists merely of the man taking possession of the woman in the presence of the rest of the group, taking her by the hand to a new bed built for the occasion and allotted a place within the circle. The 'marriage' takes place in the late evening and is followed by frenzied dancing all night long by the light of the resin torches. The total absence of any form of ritual leads one to suppose isolation from a very early date indeed, but this cannot be more than conjecture.

14 BURIAL

The custom of burying the dead in caves still occupied by the living apparently existed in the Palaeolithic era. The practice has continued to the present time in the Andamans, where the dead are still buried under the family bed in the communal hut. It is known from Palaeolithic burials that even in that era objects were sometimes buried with the dead, and it is thus possible that the culture of the Andamans dates back to very early times.

15 EXHUMATION AND SECOND BURIAL

The custom of exhuming the bones of the dead and re-interring them after coloration (in this case with ochre) dates from the Palaeolithic era.

16 BONE NECKLACES

The custom of wearing necklaces of carpals, tarsals, phalanges and fragments of rib, is of extreme antiquity, and apart from the Andamans, has virtually disappeared.

17 RELIGION

There is evidence that even in Palaeolithic times there existed a belief in the survival of the spirit after death, and a fear of its return (hence the

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

dead were buried securely bound in a knee-to-chest position, still the custom among the Andamanese). The Onges go no further than this and the idea of a Lord of the Spirits who rules all things, although on Great Andaman there has been some progress towards more anthropomorphic concepts. The complete absence of any form of cult, prayer, representation, or votive offering cannot, I feel, be the result of cultural decline from a more advanced age; this would have resulted in gross distortion and illogical superstition, but not in complete absence of any 'religious' practices of any kind.

18 SACRIFICE

No sacrifices of any kind are practised in the Andamans, nor is there any concept of propitiation, although there is evidence that even in the late Palaeolithic era some form of ritual sacrifice was practised, at least in Europe and probably over a much wider area. One would assume from this, and from paragraph 17 above, that the Andamanese is an even older culture.

19 TABOOS

Although my own experiences among the Onges have led me to think that taboos do not exist, some authors have asserted (in my view wrongly) their existence on Great Andaman. It is not, however, possible to draw any reliable conclusions on this point.

20 CEREMONIAL

The complete absence of any form of ritual surrounding birth, the purification of women, initiation, etc., or evidence of any such ritual in the past, is striking, in view of the prevalence in all the surrounding areas of strictly observed ceremonial for many occasions. As in the case of religion, such complete absence can only mean that the Andamanese became isolated before the idea of ritual spread to the area.

21 MEASUREMENT

The Andamanese have no means of counting, and no words to express gradations of time or size; to them everything is either 'small' or 'big'. They take no interest in the passing of years, and have no idea of their own age. To them life is but the passing of the seasons and the harvests of game and fish and fruits that they bring. This utter lack of any sense

or form of numerical evaluation is further support for the extremely low stage of cultural development at which they became isolated.

22 ART

When painting their bodies with ochre the Onges have no idea of symbolic representation, and use only geometrical designs. These invariably seem spontaneous, and in my view do not represent a degenerate form of some more highly evolved art, half forgotten over the centuries; in short, the 'artists' of the Andamans, with no conception of symbolism, are even today less advanced than their Palaeolithic counterparts.

23 DIGGING STICKS

In late Palaeolithic deposits, stones with holes in them have been found which correspond to those still in use among peoples such as the Bushmen, to add weight to their digging sticks. The absence even today of any form of weighted stick in the Andamans, where stone is plentiful, would appear to antedate the culture at least to early Palaeolithic.

24 HUNTING

The Onges still use the Palaeolithic throwing stick, although it is not their main hunting weapon. They have no idea of fixed traps, which must from the evidence have been known in Palaeolithic times, and it is hard to believe that a people so dependent upon hunting would have lost the art once it had been acquired. They have crude nets which the women use for fishing, but these are probably a comparatively recent introduction, which has arrived via the Nicobars.

25 DOMESTIC ANIMALS

The Andamanese have none, and this would seem to add weight to the evidence for their great antiquity.

26 ECONOMY

There is no economic system of any kind, and from the evidence available it is highly unlikely that even the most primitive form ever existed. There is no conception whatever of providing for tomorrow, or of any form of exchange or barter.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

27 WEAPONS

The wall paintings of the Palaeolithic era depict bows and arrows, the former of both the simple and the double-curve type, and the latter with one or more points, similar to those still used in the Andamans. (The same *marques de chasse* as those found on bone arrowheads of the late Palaeolithic era were on *Tridacna* arrowheads which I found in the lower strata of the kitchen-middens.) The harpoon, with detachable point and cord, was widespread in the late Palaeolithic era, and this too has persisted unchanged to the present day in the Andamans.

28 NAVIGATION

There is no proof that Palaeolithic Man travelled by water, but it can be argued that the proven antiquity of the Andamanese culture is of itself evidence in favour of the supposition that he did.

The author is of the opinion that the sum of the evidence outlined above is overwhelmingly in favour of the continuing existence in the Andamans of what may well be a virtually unchanged Palaeolithic or even pre-lithic culture.